

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, December 26. 1693.

Quest. 1. **T**Here was a Maiden, with whom I engaged so far in Love, that I promised her Marriage, and she the like to me, unknown to our Friends, the which when they come to understand, they were very much troubled at, and have so far workt upon her that she deny'd all that had pass'd between us, and told me positively she would never Marry me: Now the Question is, *Whether I am not at Liberty, notwithstanding my Promises to her, to marry any other, she having freely Discharged me before Witnesses from all Obligations under her own Hand?*

Ans. Without doubt she has made all your Promises void, except you were such a stark staring Lover as to Promise you'd have her whether she would or no; for 'tis plain that upon no other Terms you can ever keep your word: For in this Case Promises are always understood to be reciprocal, or at least made to such Persons where an impossibility does not destroy the Design; therefore you are left to your Discretion, and if you have Courage enough, may venture the like repulse from another.

Quest. 2. *Whether he who solicits his Neighbours Wife for another, doth not amply prove himself both Friend and Pimp?*

Ans. Undoubtedly a Pimp, and such a Friend as the Devil may be said to be; for such an Office is no act of Friendship, the very Essence of Friendship consisting in virtuous actions.

Quest. 3. *A Gentleman of a very plentiful Estate lost it by Misfortunes, insomuch that he was obliged to put his Son Apprentice to a Trade which the Son thought beneath him; now his Son hath such a Proffer offered him by a Person of Quality as he is perswaded will in time restore both his Father and Brethren into as good a state as heretofore they have been in, but his Master will not part with him upon such Propositions as he is able to make for his Time: For if he leaves his Master, it will prove to the great Detriment of his Masters Family; and if he stays, it will prove greatly to the Damage both of himself and Relations: Pray your speedy Answer and Advice in this Case?*

Ans. If the Injury will be as great to his Master as the Benefit will be to him, no Man can blame the Master for being unwilling to part with his Servant, tho' it is not improbable but some way might be found to relieve them both; for if the Advantage he can be to his Master must be by his Understanding his Business, and tho' another raw Apprentice cannot do the like Service, yet why may not a Summ of Money and an Experienced Journey-man manage the Master's Business as well, and get the Servant his Liberty; tho' if the last is not to be had, Justice requires the Contracted Time.

Quest. 4. *A Friend of mine, who lost his Fortune by Crois Fate, being a Gentleman well bred, had the misfortune to happen in Company with two Gentlewomen, one of them being Married and had no Children, she having a great desire to enjoy that Blessing: Intended to bestow her Favours on the aforesaid Gentleman, who being so much charm'd by her Intreignes, that he could not avoid being deluded by her, and she being desirous to have his Constant Conversation, further insnared him, by perswading him to marry the other Gentlewoman, who was her Cousin, having had but four days Acquaintance, got him before an excommunicated Parson, when he was in Drink, and*

there was Married; they liv'd together fourteen days after, when some ill-tempered People, and especially her Friends was not pleased with their Marriage, raised a most scandalous Aspersions upon the Gentleman, which the Woman believed and left him, notwithstanding his offering all the Satisfaction that could be expected in that Nature; he has often sent to her this Year and a Half, and could not hear from her, but that she will not own him as her Husband, tho' his Person, and Vertues deserves a better:

Query, *Now he desires to know how he shall behave himself in this Matter, or whether or no the Marriage be lawful, or he shou'd discharge his Duty, in compelling her to live and die with him; altho' she is no Fortune, he does mightily Repent his Folly with the married Woman, and indeed with either, for it has hindered his Preferment, otherwise; your Opinion and Advice is earnestly desired?*

Ans. Your Friend has made the Proverb good with a Vengeance, *Marry in haste, &c.* but he must e'en take its due Reward, Repentance for his Pains; and tho' a Person, that Acts so palpably contrary to Reason, hardly deserves any Pity; yet since his Case seems to have something of Unhappiness as well as Reflection in it, we shall give him our Advice and good Wishes, as a Debt we owe to the Unfortunate; tho' a Minister under Excommunication ought not to perform any such part of his Function, yet after it is once done, it is of force, it being very plain, that there was both their Consents, and probable that nothing essential to Matrimony was wanting. And if he has been guilty of no Action since that wou'd dissanul the Marriage, she is lawfully his Wife, and he may, and wou'd do well, if he can maintain her, to oblige her to live with him, to convince her in a Friendly Manner that these Reports are false, by bringing his Proofs against them, is the most likely way to gain her; but if she's obstinate, and will hear no Reason, he may Compel her, and afterwards satisfy her by an obliging Carriage.

Quest. 5. *I am a Young Man, and am acquainted with two Young Ladies, I have Courted the one, and the other I can plainly see Loves me, but against her own Inclinations pleads for me to the other, and useth all her Interest to make me happy; though I fear she will thereby be unhappy.*

Query, *Whether of the two I ought to marry, she which I have Courted, or the other that Loves me?*

Ans. If the Person you have Courted, either flights, or has no esteem for you, you may without any Prejudice put a Period to your Suit; and if you have Generosity and Gratitude enough to Love where you are beloved, probably you will not only make yourself, but another happy also. Tho' if on the contrary, the Lady you have made your Addressee to accepts of, and has made an obliging return to 'em; you can neither in Justice nor Honour forsake her, but must be hers, and can only afford the Poor Suffering Lady a little Cold Pity.

Quest. 6. *One who hath a very advantageous Offer, the Condition being only to give the seventh part of its Value, and hath not any thing of his own, nor Friends in a Capacity to supply him with such a Summ, desires you speedily to Advise him what to do in this Affair?*

Ans. 'Tis almost impossible amongst a
Man's

Man's Friends but there shou'd be some that have Credit at least, if they are not very rich, and 'tis not improbable but by that means you may be capable to procure such a Summ as you now have occasion for; and especially if you secure them, by making over such part of what you gain as will bear them harmless, upon which score you might likewise have Money of any Stranger.

Quest. 7. There's some Persons by reason of their considerable Concerns in the World was left Guardians for a Gentleman's Children deceas'd, who being left young, and each of them having a considerable Fortune, which came into the Guardians Hands; they were kept abroad, not according to what each of them had, for the Interest of each Childs Money comes to more than was expended annually on them; the young Men being at Age demands their Patrimony, that they may settle themselves in the World, the young Women wants theirs also, being capable of Marriage, to put themselves well off, according to their Fortunes; these Children address themselves to their Guardians, being Men that make a Figure in the World, not doubting but having their own; they are not only dismiss'd at first with fine fair words, but at length hufft, threatned, and cannot get from them so much as to subsist on, whereupon the Daughters of the Deceased turn Whores, and the young Men are turn'd Bullies, and go on the Pad; and it's thought if timely Care be not taken, they'll all come to an ill End, having not Money nor Friends to stand by them to seek Relief by Law for their Just Right. *Gentlemen, You are earnestly desired not to fail in your next Mercury, to give your Candid Advice, what is best to be done in this Case for the good of the Children?*

Ans. If the Will can be proved, there's no doubt but these Persons may have redress; and 'tis not impossible but some Gentleman or other that was their Father's Acquaintance wou'd stand their Friend in this Affair, if he was acquainted with their Circumstances, and application were made to him; but if not, there's many Lawyers wou'd undertake so just a Cause, on Condition of receiving their Reward when the Children shou'd come to the Possession of their Fortunes, and no other way but the Law can be hoped for, since 'tis plain their Guardians (if the Case be truly stated) have neither Conscience nor common Humanity.

Quest. 8. If a Man takes his Brother to be his Apprentice, whether he is bound in Duty to shew him any more Respect and Kindness than to his other unrelated Servants? and if so, wherein? and whether a Brother so bound ought to

respect and reverence him in all things as an unrelated Master?

Ans. The Obligations are reciprocally greater on both sides, the Duty of a Brother being required as well as that of a Master and a Servant; the one ought to be more kind to his Servant, and the other more diligent, if possible, and ready to serve his Master.

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